

Why would black women have more breast cancer?

Breast cancer in the U.S. is more prevalent in young black women than in white women of equivalent age, and is the second leading cause of cancer death (after lung cancer) among black women. This may be a consequence of more common hormonal contraceptive use and/or a greater frequency of abortion among young black women. Black women who develop breast cancer generally have more aggressive cancers resulting in a shortened life expectancy.

What is the risk for young women?

Janet Daling noted in 1994 [3] that women younger than 18 who had an abortion experienced a 150% increased risk of developing breast cancer. This became an 800% increased risk if they had their abortions between the 9th and 24th week of pregnancy.

What if there has been breast cancer in my family?

Women who have a family history of breast cancer and choose to have an abortion are at very high risk of developing breast cancer. Andrieu et al (1994) [4] found that women who had a family history of breast cancer and had two or more induced abortions had a 600% increased risk of breast cancer as compared to the rest of the population. Daling et al (1994) [3] noted that women who had an abortion prior to age 18 and had a positive family history of breast cancer had an *infinitely* increased risk of developing breast cancer compared to young women who had a family history of breast cancer and had not had an abortion. She also noted that women who were 30 or older at the time of their abortion and had breast cancer in their family history had a 270% increased risk.

But isn't pregnancy and childbirth more dangerous than abortion?

No. The risk of breast cancer is increased by abortion; suicide risk is much higher after an abortion; and risk of ovarian cancer is decreased after a full-term pregnancy. Because of changes in these three risk factors, abortion is many times more hazardous in the long-run than carrying a child to term.

How can I protect myself?

Many of the known risk factors for breast cancer can be avoided: hormone exposure (including hormonal contraceptives), induced abortion, heavy alcohol use, obesity, and radiation exposure. In addition, there is a significant reduction of risk with each child a woman bears. Every month of breastfeeding reduces breast cancer risk, as does bearing a child at a younger age. Vitamin A (which should not be taken in high doses by women who could become pregnant) and some commercial medications may offer some protection. Any woman, especially if she has one or more of the known risk factors, should consult a physician regularly and perform frequent self-breast exams.

If abortion and chemical contraceptives are so dangerous, what options do couples have?

Natural Family Planning (NFP) methods are available which use no chemicals or surgery and cause no increase in breast cancer risk. Not to be confused with the "rhythm method," NFP is based on observations of a woman's cervical mucus and (for some methods) other symptoms as well. One of the largest research studies of NFP (involving 19,843 women and performed in India by the World Health